



**NEWS RELEASE**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**Minister Cullen welcomes European Court of Justice ruling on  
Post Office Payments**

**Martin Cullen TD**, Minister for Social and Family Affairs has today (13 November 2007) welcomed the ruling by European Court of Justice, that the Government's decision in 1999 to extend the Department's contractual arrangements with An Post for the delivery of social welfare payments, did not breach EU rules.

Speaking about the ruling, **Minister Cullen TD** said: "An Post and the Department of Social and Family Affairs have been partners in the delivery of social welfare payments since the foundation of the State. I am confident that An Post and its network of local post offices will continue to deliver social welfare payments in the future."

In 1992, the Department and An Post entered into a five-year contract for the delivery of social welfare payments. This contract was renewed in 1997 for a further three years to the end of 1999. The Government's decision in 1999, to extend the Department's contractual arrangements with An Post, gave rise to a procurement complaint being lodged with the European Commission in 2000. The complaint was subsequently referred to the European Court of Justice by the European Commission.

Today the European Court of Justice ruled that "*.... in entrusting the provision of social benefit payment services to An Post without undertaking any prior advertising, Ireland has not failed to fulfil its obligations under Articles 43 EC and 49 EC and the general principles of Community law in connection with a contract for the supply of such services*". The Department is studying the judgement and



## **Department of Social and Family Affairs**

---

its implications for the current arrangements with An Post and the delivery of payment services.

### **PRESS RELEASE ENDS**

#### **Issued by:**

Michelle Hoctor, 087 8563070

Oonagh Duffy 087 254 9683